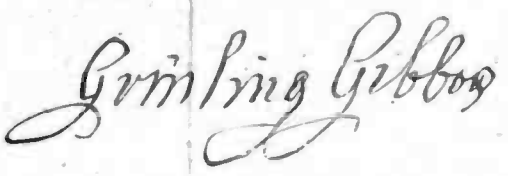
SCULPTORS AND CARVERS.



"An original genius, a citizen of the world," says Walpole, consequently it is indifferent where she produced him. When a man strikes out novelty for himself, the place of his birth has little claim upon his merit. An inventor is equally a master whether born in Italy or Lapland. Grinling Gibbons, it is supposed, was born in Holland of English parents, or at least so on the father's side, and came over at about nineteen years of age. We have no account of any training to the rare excellence so early attained; his first known efforts were as successful as those he subsequently produced, differing only in appropriateness to the buildings enriched by his hand. He lived for some time poor and unfriended, but his merit fortunately attracted the notice of that benevolent admirer and patron of art, Mr. Evelyn, and Gibbons needed but a first move to reach the goal of eminence. Belle Sauvage Court, Ludgate-hill, is the spot where Gibbons is said to have produced the specimen that proved him capable of imitating nature with the most perfect accuracy, in bolder relief, and a lighter style of handling than had been previously attempted; this was a pot of flowers, so delicately carved as to exhibit every characteristic and undulation of a natural bouquet. He afterwards lived at Deptford, and it was in an obscure quarter there that he was found by Mr. Evelyn, who, conjointly with Sir Peter Lely, recommended him to the notice of Charles the Second, and that monarch was so much pleased with his skill, that he not only employed him in ornamenting the royal palaces, but bestowed upon him a place of some emolument at the board of works.

Gibbons was both sculptor and carver; the marble pedestal of the equestrian statue of Charles II. in the principal court at Windsor, is an example in which the detail is elaborate and beautifully executed; but it was as a carver that he principally distinguished himself. Foliage, flowers, and the plumage of birds, in which every leaf, petal, and fibre was preserved, were his favourite works; his imitations of point lace, so much worn at that particular period, are also extraordinary, shewing with what facility his eye caught and followed the maze of tracery that fabric is remarkable for; he was, moreover, indefatigable in his profession, and has left abundant examples deserving the study of carvers of the present day.

In Windsor Castle are numerous carvings by this artist; here and at Kensington Palace are seen the most genuine because unassisted specimens; these were his earliest works upon the large scale, executed when he had not yet had time to train the many hands who afterwards assisted him. At Windsor, Hampton Court, Burleigh, and Chatsworth, Gibbons carved while Verrio painted the ceilings and staircases; indeed, these popular decorators worked much together, and the palaces and seats mentioned still retain the embellishments of both in a high state of preservation.

The magnificent tomb of Viscount Camden, in the church at Exton, in Rutlandshire, 22 feet high and 14 wide, is by Gibbons, who also carved the throne at Canterbury, erected at the cost of Archbishop Tenison. We must again recur to Burleigh, the seat of the Marquis of Exeter, as containing a noble profusion of his carvings in picture-frames, chimney-pieces, and door-cases; and at Chatsworth there is a great deal by Gibbons, particularly in the chapel; and in the great antechamber several dead fowl over the chimney-piece, finely executed; and over a closet-door a pen, scarcely distinguishable from real feather. When he had completed his work at Chatsworth for the Duke of Devonshire, he presented that nobleman with some gems of his art, which are preserved in a glass case in the gallery there; these consist of a medal with his own head, a woodcock, and a point-lace cravat, all shewing that no task in carving was too difficult for him to undertake, and that he revelled in almost microscopic excellence in delineation. At Petworth, also, there is a large chamber ornamented from the ceiling with foliage, flowers, and dead game, all perfect representations; and appended to one of the enriched panels, an antique vase with bas-reliefs, worthy to be classed with the finest specimens of Grecian art; we are told that in saving this particular panel when the seat was on fire, one of his assistants, *Selden*, lost his life, so highly prized were these finished works even by those who were most familiar with them.

Gibbons wrought most extensively, and had several persons under his instruction and employ. *Selden*, whom we have just mentioned, and *Watson*, *Dievot*, and *Laurens*, are names known by subsequent works; in his time they were occupied in certain departments of ornament, but chiefly in figure carving, where such was introduced, for no single hand could have accomplished the number of examples he has left. It must be remarked that we have merely enumerated his most prominent works; he wrought also in many other seats of the nobility and gentry, and in some of the churches of London and the provinces, and we have many times recognized detached pieces of his carving which had, no doubt, been removed to make way for rebuilding or improvements, within the last twenty-five years.

Gibbons died in 1721, and his extensive collection of models, casts, and carvings were sold by auction; amongst them were two chimney-pieces valued even in that day at upwards of 100*l.* each. There is no trace of the whereabout of these objects of art; could they be discovered and referred to, a stimulus to modern exertion would be afforded, for which there is much need, and undoubted promise of ample remuneration.

METROPOLITAN FOUNTAINS, AND OCCASIONAL SQUIRTS.

Sir Robert Peel, during the recent discussion on the miscellaneous estimates, stated that he thought some *handsome fountains* would prove a great ornament to the metropolis; but he was strongly opposed to those *occasional squirts* which were sometimes to be seen. He, therefore, should hesitate to propose any grant for the repair of the "*jet d'eau*" in Bushy-park. We entirely concur in this opinion of Sir Robert Peel, who is not only a good judge, but a liberal patron of the fine arts. We have, in common with most of our countrymen, long regretted the absence, in our public parks and gardens, of that beautiful ornament "the fountain," which never fails to impart life and interest to the surrounding scene; but then, as Sir Robert Peel justly adds, fountains should be really *handsome*. We hope, therefore, that the amiable and accomplished nobleman, Lord Lincoln, who presides with so much ability over the Woods and Forests, will lose no time in carrying out the suggestions of the Premier, and the strongly expressed wishes of the public, by removing that very mean, shabby, unsightly, lotus-leaved fountain, which occasionally *squirts* in front of the Royal palace, in St. James's-park, and substitute in its place one better suited to that beautiful position and attractive garden—a garden which is day by day assuming a more picturesque and agreeable aspect, from the numerous specimens of choice plants which Lord Lincoln has caused to be placed in various spots, and in the arrangement and selection of which a degree of taste has been displayed which reflects upon his lordship very great credit. We also gladly avail ourselves of this opportunity of expressing our approbation of the manner in which the walks are kept; and, indeed, of every thing in these gardens, except the "*jet d'eau*," which is really an offence against good taste, and especially exposes us to the ridicule of foreigners.—*British Queen*.

OUR CORRESPONDENCE.

PAINTERS' EYE-SIGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Sir,—If you think the following suggestion likely to be adopted by the trade, perhaps you will insert it. I have often pitied the unfortunate painters and whitewashers, who are often seen "laying on the colour" in bright sunshine; the glare must be very distressing to them, and highly injurious to their sight; it appears to me that there is a remedy for it by using common *green* glass spectacles, which could be made at a cheap rate, and if these are not liked as being *hot* for the eyes, why should not wire-gauze spectacles, such as those used for railway travelling, be adopted by painters and others? Only walk up Regent-street and look at the houses on which the sun is shining, and only think what it must be for the poor workmen who are *obliged* to look steadfastly at it, and then you will agree with me, that something ought to be done to prevent our fellow-workmen from being injured. The knife-grinders of Sheffield have magnetic masks, to prevent them inhaling the iron dust, and if one trade should turn their attention to health, why should not another follow their good example? I hope that some of the trade (masters as well as men) will follow up and work into this suggestion.

In haste, I am, Sir, your well-wisher,

April 24th, 1843. Humanity.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Sir,—Suppose a beam of deal 12 inches by 2 inches, and supported at a distance of 10 feet in clear, and a weight of 2 tons placed in the centre, what is the average amount of compression per inch down to that part of the beam which is neither compressed nor extended? Also, what is the average amount of extension up to that part of the beam per inch? also, what distance from the top of the said beam is that section called, I believe, the neutral section?

Again, suppose the said beam be raised at one end, so that the distance between the supports is 6 feet in clear, how is the strength affected, and also the whole of the beam as regards compression and extension as above?

Your answer to the above will be of great service to myself and all connected in the building line.

Your well-wisher. Sperd.

Foleshill, April 20, 1843.

The measure of compression and extension that would take place in any beam of wood when loaded in the centre, can only be obtained by experiment, and would always vary with the quality of the same.

A beam of deal of average quality 12 inches by 2 inches, placed edgeways on bearings 10 feet apart, would be safe in practice, with 2½ tons suspended from its centre, or 5 tons spread equally over its length; but the measure of compression and extension would depend entirely on its quality.

Suppose, for example, we take two beams of the same dimensions, and as near the same quality as we can judge, and suppose one of their edges to be fibrous and the other short or sappy, it is clear that very different results would be obtained by subjecting the sappy edge in one to extension, and the other to compression, and therefore the neutral axis would also vary, nor can, for this reason, any exact point be assigned to it.

If the beam be varied at one end, and the bearings brought within 6 feet of each other instead of 10 feet, its strength will be the same as though laid horizontally on two bearings 6 feet apart.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Sir,—Walking into a coffee-room last week to glide away an hour, by chance I took up a number of The Builder, the perusal of which so convinced me of its utility and importance, that I have ordered the back numbers and a continuation of the succeeding ones. Permit me, Sir, to express my admiration at the talented, liberal, and enthusiastic ardour that your magazine has produced in the minds of your architectural correspondents: the alacrity with which they obeyed your discreet and eloquent appeal for support proves their readiness to contribute to the future improvement of the working classes, and their communications being illustrated by drawings greatly enhances their value; and I fervently hope that my brother workmen will not permit this golden opportunity to escape them unnoticed, unappreciated, and unsupported, for if The Builder is not adequately supported, they cannot expect the weekly engraving of drawings. The suggestion of some of your subscribers to make The Builder a newspaper I do not concur with, for in a newspaper there would be matter that would

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